

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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### NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES OFFER PEOPLE GLIMPSE OF HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT, SECRETARY HICKEL SAYS

Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel said today that the national wildlife refuge "open houses" in April will "let people see what a healthy environment really is like."

Open houses are scheduled on nearly 100 of the national wildlife refuges during the week of April 13-19. The refuges are operated by Interior's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, and preserve natural habitat for many species of wildlife. From desert sheep to waterbirds.

Varied activities are planned during each observance, which may run a single day or more. Exact dates are being announced locally by refuge managers where visitations are planned.

"These open houses on our areas are especially timely because of increased concern for environmental problems and because of the environmental teach-ins scheduled across the country on April 22," Secretary Hickel said.

He added: "Although more than 16 million people visited refuges in 1969, many millions more do not understand that refuges not only are for wildlife, but are a human sanctuary also. They are places where people may see a healthy environment--living creatures in harmony with their natural habitat of plants, trees, land, clean air and water "

Secretary Hickel said that the open houses also will bring attention to the Department's concern for the environment and the role that the refuges can play in this subject of critical concern.

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife operates 326 refuges in 46 States, with the areas ranging in size from small islands that are nesting sites for key bird populations to big-game ranges covering millions of acres.

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